

# PASSION WEEK: SUNDAY THROUGH MONDAY

Matthew 21:1-19; Mark 11:1-19; Luke 19:28-48; John 12:12-50

## STRUCTURE

**Key-person:** Jesus

**Key-location:** Jerusalem

**Key-repetitions:**

- Conflicts between Jesus and religious leaders: during Jesus' Triumphal Entrance, Pharisees demanded Jesus order his followers to stop praising him. Jesus answered that if they were silent, the stones would cry out (Lk 19:39-40); the cleansing of the Temple (Mt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-19; Lk 19:45-48).

- Jerusalem/city: Jesus approached it (Mk 11:1; Lk 19:41); Jesus was on his way to it (Jn 12:12); he wept over it (Lk 19:41); he entered it (Mt 21:10); Monday, he returned to it (Mk 11:15); he went out of the city (Mk 11:19).

- Crowd: came to the feast (Jn 12:12); witnessed that Jesus had raised Lazarus (Jn 12:17); asked who Jesus was (Mt 21:10); the Pharisees said the whole world had gone after Jesus (Jn 12:19); the crowd listening to Jesus (Jn 12:29); did not believe in him (Jn 12:37).

- Temple: after the Triumphal Entrance, Jesus entered the Temple (Mk 11:11); the following day, he entered the patio of the Temple, and expelled all those were selling, and accused them of transforming God's house into a hangout for robbers (Mt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-19; Lk 19:45-48).

**Key-attitudes:**

- During the Triumphal Entrance: the joy of the crowd, the resentment of the Pharisees, and the sadness that Jesus felt for Jerusalem.

- Jesus' anger when he cursed the barren fig tree and

when he purified the Temple.

- The Greeks desire to see Jesus.

- The people's disbelief in Jesus.

- The fear of the religious leaders who did believe in Jesus.

**Initial-situation:**

During the second semester of the third year of Jesus' public ministry, he made three trips to Jerusalem to participate in three religious feasts. The first trip was for the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus' second trip to Jerusalem was for the Feast of Dedication. Jesus was in the Temple area, and claimed that God was his father. The Jews picked up stones to kill him.

Then Jesus went back across the Jordan River to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Jesus left that place to return to Bethany where he resurrected Lazarus from the grave (Jn 11:1-44). The Sanhedrin began to plot to kill Jesus (Jn 11:45-53). Therefore, Jesus withdrew to a secluded village called Ephraim (Jn 11:54).

Jesus made his trip to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover by traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

**Initial-problem:**

On Sunday, before the celebration of the Passover Feast, Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem.

**Final-situation:**

Monday evening came and Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem.

## BIBLE STORY

### SUNDAY

**Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem** Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:28-44; Jn 12:12-19

Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem and came to the Mount of Olives. Jesus instructed two of his disciples, "Go into the next village. Just as you enter it, you will find a donkey colt tied there. It has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you why are you untying the donkey, answer him that the Lord needs it and will return it shortly."

They found a colt in the street, tied at a doorway, and they untied it. Some bystanders asked, "Why are you untying that colt?" The disciples answered as Jesus had instructed them. The people let them take the donkey. They led the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it. Jesus mounted it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches in the fields and spread them on the roads (Mk 11:1-8; Mt 21:1-11).

A large crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was entering Jerusalem. They broke off palm branches and went out to meet him, cheering, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!" (Jn 12:12-13).

The crowd that had been with Jesus when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead, kept telling about this miracle they had witnessed. The people who heard about Jesus working this miracle went out to meet him (Jn 12:17-18).

Those who ran ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mk 11:9-10).

Some Pharisees in the crowd told Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"  
Jesus replied, "I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will shout praises" (Lk 19:39-40).

Jesus approached Jerusalem. When he saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you had only recognized today what would bring you peace; but it is hidden from your eyes. The day will come when your enemies will surround you with their barricades and press in from every side. They will smash you and your children on the pavement within your walls. They will not leave one stone intact on another. This will happen because you did not recognize the time when God came to visit you" (Lk 19:41-44).

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was excited and asked, "Who is this?"  
The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee" (Mt 21:10-11).

The Pharisees said to one another, "This is getting us nowhere. It is out of control. The whole world has gone after him!" (Jn 12:19).

Jesus looked around at everything in the Temple, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve (Mk 11:11).

## **MONDAY**

### **Jesus Cursed the Unfruitful Fig Tree** Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14, 20-24

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. He saw in the distance a fig tree covered with leaves. He went to find out if it had any figs. Jesus reached the tree and found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Jesus addressed the tree, "No one will ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it (Mk 11:12-14).

The following day, on Tuesday morning, as they returned to Jerusalem, they saw the fig tree and its roots had completely dried up. Peter remembered what Jesus had done and said to him, "Teacher, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

Jesus answered, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, everything you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Prayer is not just asking; when you stand praying, you must forgive the wrong others have done to you; only then will your Father in heaven forgive you your sins" (Mk 11:20-25).

### **Jesus Cleansed the Temple** Mt 21:12-16; Mk 11:15-18; Lk 19:45-48

Now back to Monday morning. When Jesus and his disciples reached Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling. He turned over the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. He would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the Temple courts. He taught the people saying, "God's words found in the Scripture says, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.' But you have made it a hangout for robbers."

The chief priests and the teachers of the Law heard about Jesus' actions and began looking for a way to kill him. They panicked, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching (Mk 11:15-19).

### **Some Greeks Met with Jesus** Jn 12:20-33

Some Greeks had traveled to Jerusalem to worship during the Passover Feast. They approached Philip, one of the disciples, with a request. "Sir, we want to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip went together and told Jesus.

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But, if it is buried and dies, it sprouts and produces many grains. The person who loves his life will lose it, while the person who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me; my servant will be with me where I am. My Father will honor the one who serves me (Jn 12:20-26).

"Now my heart is deeply troubled; what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour of suffering. Father, glorify your name!"

A voice spoke from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Some in the crowd said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to Jesus.

Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time when the world will be judged. Now the prince of this world will be overthrown. When the Son of Man is lifted up from the earth, he will make everyone want to come to him." Jesus was indicating the kind of death he was going to die (Jn 12:27-33).

### **The People Refused to Believe in Jesus** Jn 12:34-50

Even after Jesus had performed all these miracles in the presence of the people, they still would not believe in him (Jn 12:37-41).

However, many Jewish leaders did believe in Jesus. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith. They feared that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. Human approval was more important to them than God's approval (Jn 12:42-43).

When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city (Mk 11:19). Jesus went into hiding (Jn 12:36).

## **GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?

6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the reasons why the religious leaders were angry at Jesus?
2. During his Triumphal Entry, how was Jesus received by:
  - His disciples?
  - People who had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus?
  - The crowd?
  - The Pharisees?
3. What was the reason Jesus gave for cleansing the Temple?
4. What did Jesus say when the Greeks wanted to see him?
5. What helps or hinders your belief in Jesus?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. People react in different ways toward Jesus the King. During Jesus' Triumphal Entry, several attitudes and actions are obvious:
  - The disciples' joy. They were jubilant, praising God for all of the miracles they had seen (Lk 19:37). They still didn't understand everything about Jesus (Jn 12:16); however, they wanted to follow and serve him (Jn 12:26).
  - The secret disciples' fear. Some kept secret their faith in Jesus because they were concerned about what others would think about them (Jn 12:42-43).
  - Judas' betrayal. Judas, the traitor, was among the disciples pretending to be a loyal disciple; his evil intentions were hidden.
  - The conspiracy of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were enemies of Jesus: they rejected him (Lk 19:39), plotted to kill him (Jn 11:53), desired to eliminate anyone who inspired others to believe in Jesus--they wanted to kill Lazarus (Jn 12:10-11), and were upset when others showed interest in Jesus (Jn 12:19).
  - The insatiability of the crowd. The crowd was unstable, flip-flopping from being for Jesus to being against him. The crowd that greeted Jesus with "Hosanna" and "King", six days later was screaming, "Crucify him!" (Jn 12:12-18 with 19:15). In one scene, the crowd stood close to the disciples, praising Jesus (Lk 19:37-38). In another scene, they stood beside their leaders, asking for his crucifixion (Lk 23:21). Then later, they lamented Jesus' condemnation (Lk 23:27) and after his death they were inconsolable (Lk 23:48).
  - The curious Greeks wanted to see Jesus (Jn 12:20-26).
2. The incident of the cursed barren fig tree (Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14, 20-26) is a dramatic illustration:
  - Of the curse that falls on hypocrisy. Hypocrisy gives appearance without result (the fig tree with leaves had the appearance of a tree with fruit). The fig tree was similar to Israel; it had the knowledge of God, its religious tradition gave the appearance of true religion. However, in rejecting her Messiah, it will be cursed;
  - Of the power of the prayer of faith. The object of faith is God. Faith in Jesus is faith in God. In Jewish slang, to remove mountains meant to solve problems. The person with true faith doesn't face unbeatable difficulties. (See James 1:6.)
3. The purification of the Temple reveals that Jesus is irritated with religion (1<sup>st</sup> time: Jn 2:13-22. 2<sup>nd</sup> time: Mt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-19; Lk 19:45-48):
  - When it is secularized. When those who are committed to the true religion behave just like those who do not believe in the Lord God, Jesus is angered. The religious people at the Temple were exploiting the people, just like non-believers did in the market place.
  - When it is marketed. When religious people seek financial advantages with the true religion, Jesus is angered.
  - When it is without reverence. The noise of the animals and merchants made it impossible to have reverence in the Temple.
  - When it is creating barriers for those who want to know God. The trade was conducted in the part of the Temple reserved for non-Jews.
4. Jesus' death produced the transformation of a lot of lives. The seed that reproduces a thousand seeds must first be planted, germinate and grow. The seed that dies to grow into a seed-producing plant is like Christ who died, was buried and resurrected to transform lives (Jn 12:23-24).

5. The follower of Jesus should help people who wish to see Jesus have an encounter with him. Philip and Andrew helped the Greeks who wished to see Jesus have an encounter with him (Jn 12:20-22).
6. Miracles fascinate people and draw crowds; but, they do not provoke belief in Jesus. Even after Jesus had performed all his miraculous signs, the people still would not believe in him (Jn 12:37).